



CHARTERHOUSE



MORE HOUSE SCHOOL

Learning Beyond the Label

An Adaptive Teaching Conference



Tuesday 12th March 2024



Charterhouse School, Godalming

On Tuesday, 12th March 2024, More House School and Charterhouse School held an Adaptive Teaching Conference for those supporting 11-18 year old pupils with SEND in the classroom.

Learning Beyond the Label was created as an informative and practical evidence-based learning experience for educational professionals to hear directly from leading researchers and teachers with years of experience supporting children and young people with SEND.

The conference was held in the beautiful grounds of Charterhouse School. Visitors were warmly welcomed and took their seats in the lecture theatre to hear from **Professor Courtenay Norbury** who discussed the 'persistence of language disorder and impacts on learning and well-being'.

Courtenay is Professor of Developmental Language and Communication Disorders at University College London. She is also the Director of the Literacy, Language and Communication (LiLaC) Lab and a Fellow of the Royal College of Speech and Language Therapist. Her current research focuses on language disorders and how language interacts with other aspects of social and cognitive development.

During her talk, Professor Courtenay explored the ways in which language is absolutely critical to everything, signalling neurodiversity in language learning and language processing. She demonstrated how important language is for participating in society, securing support and preserving good mental health. She maintained that there is no 'quick fix', as the government promotion of short-term interventions at an early age might suggest. Instead, having oral language at the heart of education will provide the best support for those with developmental language disorders.



Professor Joni Holmes, Head of CALM (Centre for Attention, Learning and Memory) then took to the podium. Joni is Professor of Psychology at the University of East Anglia. Research she has been leading here challenges the use of diagnostic frameworks to identify and support children's unmet needs.

Professor Joni gave an insightful and engaging talk on the 'limitations of the diagnostic framework for identifying and supporting neurodevelopmental differences'. She spoke about looking beyond the label and showed how the 10-year CALM research project that she had headed up at the University of Cambridge proved that diagnostic labels are not an accurate predictor of the types of support that an individual will need. She presented evidence from neuroscience and psychology research around areas of behaviour and cognition to support the approaches that schools and other educational contexts should consider in their support of pupils with SEND.

The afternoon sessions were practical learning seminars led by Professor Joni Holmes and Mrs Margesson, Mr Kay, Mrs Newman and Mrs Pickett from More House School. These sessions supported strategies, approaches and context-based reflection to enable subject teachers to support whole classes when several pupils are diagnosed with SEND.

Professor Joni Holmes led a workshop which delved deeper into the role of the working memory. She described the evolution of the working memory models and how they can inform strategies for supporting pupils in school. Professor Joni also discussed aspects of her work with Susan Gathercole on working memory and its impact and implications in the classroom.



Mrs Eleanor Margesson held a group seminar exploring ways of supporting SEND in the everyday classroom. She discussed a range of strategies which could be used to support language, attention, working memory and processing in schools.

The seminar group had the opportunity to hear real-life examples of how these strategies are used in the context of More House School to ensure that all pupils can access the learning and acquire the skills to be successful. They were also able to explore other scenarios and applications within their own settings. Eleanor also introduced the Class Mapping Tool which was very well-received.



Mr James Kay explored ways of supporting GCSE-Level reading skills in English and across the curriculum.

This seminar was full of engaging discussions and lively group tasks focused on the areas of difficulty faced by pupils with SEND and recommended strategies to support the development of reading skills in the classroom.



Mrs Susie Pickett and Mrs Antoinette Newman led an interactive seminar on supporting SEND in Science. They discussed the reasons why some pupils have particular difficulty processing science language and the consequences in the classroom. Together, they shared their experiences and approach to teaching pupils with SEND and described the specialist approach to pedagogy in Science at More House School.

They discussed the deliberate adaptation of teaching methods within the Science Department to ensure that all pupils can access the language, curriculum content and learn the core concepts to succeed in Science with techniques that can be adapted to any subject area. Through practical activities and discussions, the group explored some specific examples of what this can look like in the classroom, including the Frayer model, scaffolding techniques, modelling and vocabulary levels. Participants walked away with a toolbox of resources to use in their own context.



With over 50 in attendance, this conference was a fantastic opportunity for educational professionals to network and get to know others working with children and young people with special educational needs. This learning environment facilitated countless discussions based on sharing best practice and exploring each other's experiences of supporting SEND in different contexts. Following the event, over half of the attendees have opted to share their contact details, creating an evolving network of continued discussion and learning.